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CITY OF LOMITA

OPEN SPACE-CONSERVATION ELEMENT
OF THE GENERAL PLAN

JUNE 1, 1973

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OPEN SPACE-CONSERVATION MILESTONE
ON THE GENERAL PLAN

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MAY 2, 1973

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INTRODUCTION

Open space - whether it be land, water or air space - is most broadly defined as an area which is not covered by buildings. Open space may be simply vacant and waiting for development. It may be as small as someone's backyard or as large as an oil field, and it may be used for a multitude of activities. Conservation is particularly tied to open space when land is used for production of valuable resources or is necessary to protect environmental quality and safety. For whatever purpose it is used, however, open space is vital to our environment, and its preservation and enhancement will deeply affect the ultimate economic health and development of the community.

Lomita's open space is confined to vacant land and to land used or scheduled for use in recreational facilities - parks, playgrounds, cultural facilities and bike trails. These topics will be considered in the open space section of this Element. The use of open space land for resource production - farming, ranching, oil drilling and so forth - has ceased in Lomita. Therefore, these land uses will be considered in the Conservation part of the Element from the viewpoint of any residual effects they may have on the city. The Conservation section also will consider the city's remaining resources, as well as conservation for public health and safety.

The Open Space-Conservation Element is designed to achieve three purposes. First, the Element should aid Lomita in projecting open space needs and in planning future land acquisitions in the light of population growth. Second, it should allow the city to determine the best uses of its open space and resources, balancing the rights of private property owners with the needs of the public as a whole. Finally, the plan should ensure that conservation activities are carried out for the enhancement of the health, safety and pleasure of Lomita residents.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE OPEN SPACE-CONSERVATION ELEMENT

In 1971, the Legislature amended the California Government Code to require open space and conservation elements as part of the general planning activities of cities and counties. Open space law (Section 65560 of the Code) was further amended in March, 1972. By this amendment, cities and counties are required to submit to the State Resources Agency by June 30, 1973, an adopted open space plan covering the following topics:

1. Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources, including but not limited to areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands.
2. Open Space Used for the Managed Production of Resources, including but not limited to forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of groundwater basins; bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers and streams which are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.
3. Open Space for Outdoor Recreation, including but not limited to areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open space reservations, including utility easements banks of rivers and streams, trails and scenic highway corridors.
4. Open Space for Public Health and Safety, including but not limited to areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions, such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risk, areas required for protection of water quality and water reservoirs, and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.

Current open space law incorporates the topics covered in the 1971 conservation legislation mentioned previously (Government Code Section 65302). Because of their many interrelationships, the two subjects are treated here as a combined Open Space-Conservation Element. In conformance with conservation law, the water quality section of the Element has been prepared with the assistance of the appropriate regional and local water agencies.

by the Department of Planning and Research, City of Los Angeles, California, and the Department of Planning and Research, County of Los Angeles, California.

Open Space-Conservation Element

The Open Space-Conservation Element of the General Plan is the policy statement by the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles, California, for the development and conservation of open space and natural resources within the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles.

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* Approved by the Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, California, on 10/1/71.

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OPEN SPACE IN LOMITA

Because of its location and state of development, Lomita is lacking in most of the open space uses mentioned in State legislation. The city's geography does not include watersheds, open bodies of water or ecologic study areas. Land in the city is not used for resource production, and wildlife is negligible. As a highly developed city within a large metropolitan area, Lomita's major open space interest largely is in providing additional recreational space for the city's slowly growing population.

Open Space for Recreation

The recreational needs of Lomita residents are partially filled by the city's parks and school playgrounds (Figure 1), as well as by local and regional park facilities within reasonable travel time of the city.

FIGURE I
INVENTORY OF RECREATION OPEN SPACE
CITY OF LOMITA

Use	Acreage	Total Acres Per Use
<u>Parks</u>		7.2
Lomita Park & Recreation Center	5.8	
Hathaway Park	1.0	
Railroad Museum Annex	.2	
Veteran Memorial Park	.2	
<u>School Playgrounds</u>		21.0
Eshelman Elementary	2.7	
Lomita Elementary	2.4	
Fleming Junior High	8.1	
Narbonne High*	7.8	

* Located in Harbor City (Los Angeles)

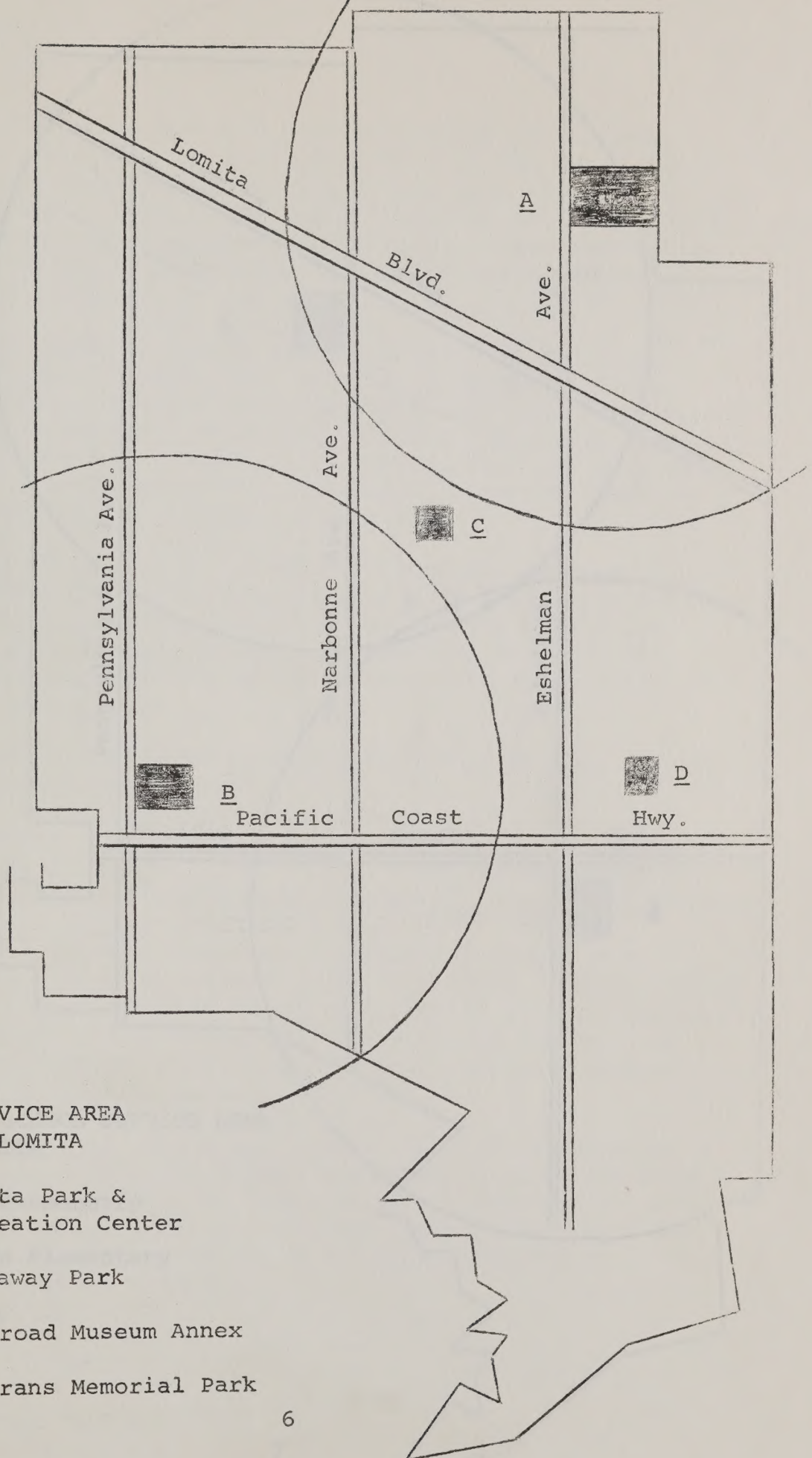
One method of determining the adequacy of recreation sites is through the use of acreage standards, though related factors such as individual park size and accessibility are also of great importance. Lomita might adopt Los Angeles County acreage standards which indicate that cities should provide local park and recreation facilities totaling $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres per 1000 population and school playgrounds totaling $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres per 1000 population. According to these standards, Lomita is very short of recreational open space, both in local parks and in school playgrounds. Figure II indicates the extent of this deficiency.

FIGURE II
DEFICIENCIES IN LOCAL OPEN SPACE
CITY OF LOMITA

	Parks	School Playgrounds
Los Angeles County Standards	$1\frac{1}{2}$ acres per 1000 population	$2\frac{1}{2}$ acres per 1000 population
Standards Applied to Lomita	30.0 acres	50.0 acres
Actual Acreage in Lomita	<u>7.2</u>	<u>21.0</u>
DEFICIENCY	22.8 acres	29.0 acres
% of Deficiency	76.0%	58.0%

Parks and playgrounds should be conveniently accessible to those who will use them. For neighborhood parks and elementary schools, the optimum accessible distance, or service area, is about $1/2$ mile. Maps I and II illustrate the service area boundaries for parks and schools in Lomita.

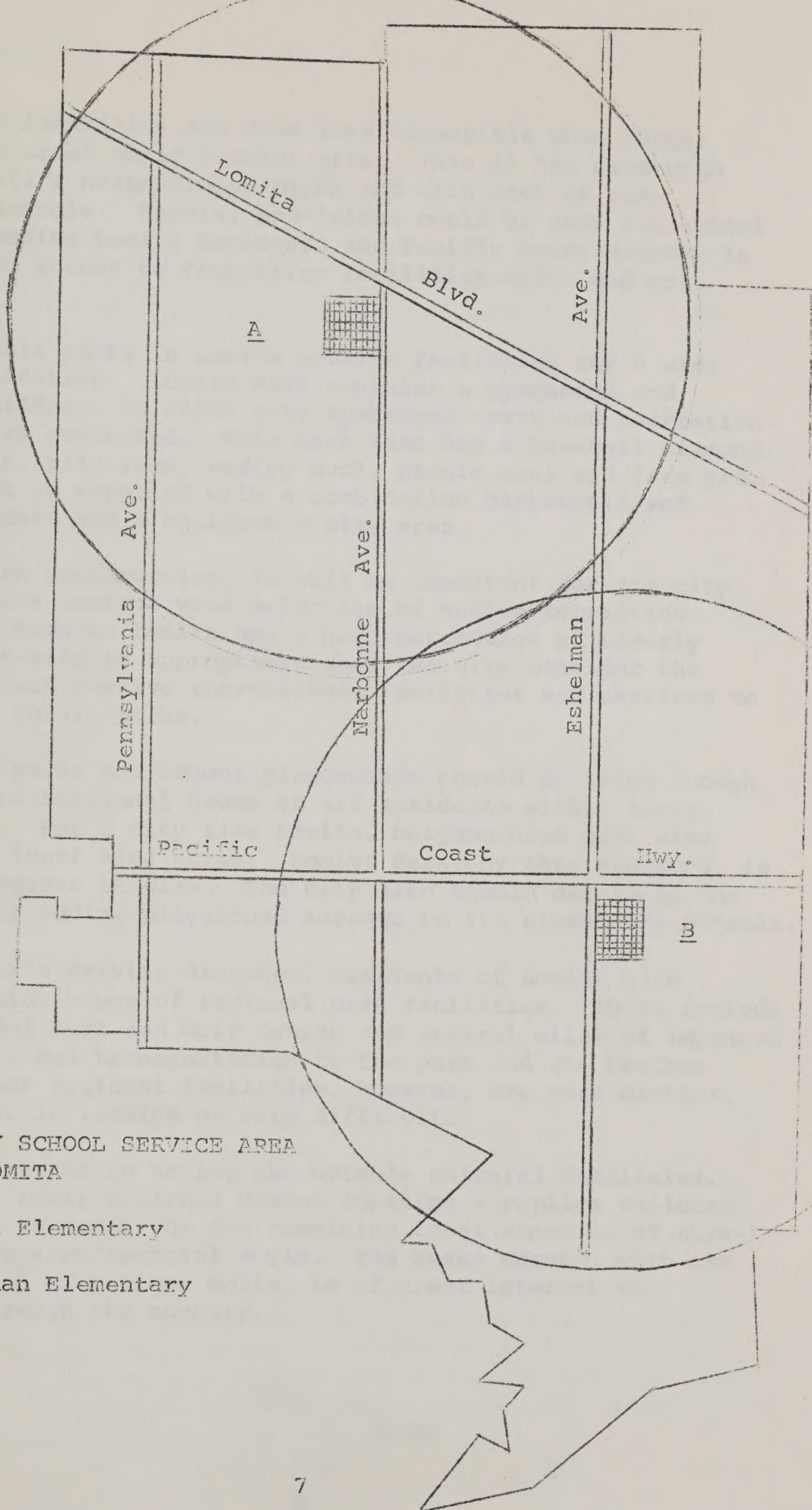
Map I shows that considerable portions of Lomita are beyond the service area of the city's two main parks. It is in these inaccessible areas that future park development is most needed. Map II shows that most of Lomita's residential area is accessible to the city's elementary schools. School children in the south, southwest and northeast borders of the city walk farther than $1/2$ mile to school. However, the residential areas inaccessible to school playgrounds are fairly close to park facilities, which somewhat reduces the total need in these areas, except for the southern most part of the city.



MAP I.

PARK SERVICE AREA
CITY OF LOMITA

- A. Lomita Park & Recreation Center
- B. Hathaway Park
- C. Railroad Museum Annex
- D. Veterans Memorial Park



MAP II.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SERVICE AREA
CITY OF LOMITA

A. Lomita Elementary

B. Eshelman Elementary

Recreational facilities are made less accessible when large, busy streets cross their service area. This is the case with each of Lomita's neighborhood parks and with each of the elementary schools. Special provisions could be made for school children crossing Lomita Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway in order to make access to recreation facilities safer and more convenient.

The two largest parks in Lomita provide facilities for a wide range of activities. Lomita Park contains a gymnasium and community building, in which city sponsored craft and recreation activities are conducted. This park also has a baseball diamond, tennis courts, play area, wading pool, picnic area and fire pit. Hathaway Park is supplied with a combination basketball and volleyball court and a children's play area.

In future park construction, it will be important for the city to maintain its current wide selection of active recreation facilities. Because Lomita has a high percentage of elderly residents, it also is appropriate that the city consider the addition of more passive recreational facilities and services to existing and future parks.

Neighborhood parks and school playgrounds should be large enough to fill the recreational needs of all residents within their service area. For a city like Lomita, neighborhood park size should be at least five acres. Lomita Park, by this standard, is more than adequate in size. The city also should determine the feasibility of adding playground acreage to its elementary schools.

Within an hour's driving distance, residents of Lomita have access to a wide range of regional park facilities. Those include Harbor Regional Park and Golf Course and several miles of improved public beach. Bus transportation to the park and the beaches is fair. Other regional facilities, however, are more distant, and bus access is lacking or very difficult.

Lomita is fortunate in having two notable cultural facilities. The Martin S. Lewis Railroad Museum contains a replica railroad station which is among the few remaining local examples of turn-of-the-century architectural style. The Kuska Museum, with its fine collection of antique dolls, is of great interest to collectors through the country.

Need for Additional Open Space for Recreation

Lomita has an immediate need for an additional 22.8 acres of local park facilities. The 1990 city population, expected to be approximately 25,000, will have need for a total 37.5 acres of local parks - 14.7 acres more than that currently required.

Lomita has taken an active role in park planning and development. The city's Master Plan of Parks calls for three new facilities, of which Hathaway Park will be the first to be developed. The other parks scheduled in the Master Plan are contemplated for the southeastern and southwestern sections of the city. Because Lomita's southeast area is not currently served by parks (see Map I), the facility built here should be of neighborhood park size. The southwestern portion of the city would be best served by a series of mini-parks, as would the other city areas not currently supplied with parks. Mini-parks, also called tot-lots, play areas or quiet areas to describe their function, can be as small as a city lot size or as large as 1/4 acre. Their greatest advantage, besides low cost, is that they can be strategically located throughout the city to provide easy park access for young children and senior citizens for whom walking distance and street barriers prevent access to the larger neighborhood parks.

Construction of Lomita's proposed civic center will add some desired recreational open space to the city. Approximately 50% of the civic center site will be devoted to green area, paths, fountains or similar improvements to meet the quiet-recreation needs of Lomita residents.

Lomita's schools also are significantly deficient in recreation area. The schools currently need an additional 29 acres of playground space. By 1990, the total need will be 62.5 acres, or 33.5 acres more than that currently needed. As a city within the Los Angeles City School District, Lomita should continue to press for funds to provide additional playground areas at all schools.

Lomita now contains about 100 acres of vacant land, much of which is found in the interior portions of the city's narrow, deep lots. It is probable that within the next ten to twenty years, most of these residential lots with older dwellings will be recycled to new low and medium density housing. Because of their narrowness, however, it has been extremely difficult to develop each lot separately. Therefore, the city should encourage gradual redevelopment of multi-lot parcels, or small subdivisions. This will enable the use of innovative site planning techniques which result both in low densities and in retention of maximum open space. At the time of such redevelopment, Lomita will have the opportunity to acquire much needed recreational open space, either through purchase or by required dedication.

A valuable addition to Lomita's recreational opportunities would be the proposed Regional Bike Trail through Palos Verdes Peninsula. The trail would touch Lomita's southern border at Palos Verdes Drive North. As an addition to an already existing trail, this path would make available many miles of enjoyable riding to Lomita residents. In order to take maximum advantage of the regional bike trail, Lomita has been studying the feasibility of developing local bike path routes within the city. Bike paths, built on city streets, would assist bicyclers in reaching the regional path and would help assure the safety of bicycle riders in Lomita.

CONSERVATION

Land in Lomita is no longer used for production of natural resources. Farming, ranching, and mineral extraction, once prevalent in the city, have been eliminated due to rising taxes and competition from residential expansion with which the earlier uses were not deemed compatible. Lomita's primary remaining resources are those of an esthetic nature - the city's general low density, the trees, and the good views. This section of the Open Space-Conservation Element will consider conservation from two standpoints: conservation of existing resources and conservation for protection of public health and safety.

Conservation of Resources

Lomita is blessed with several environmental amenities which should be considered conservable resources. Most obvious of these to the casual visitor is the overall low density of the city's residential areas. The open space character of the city is especially apparent in its 204 acres of agriculturally zoned land, most of which is in residential use. Much of the A-1 zoned acreage retains its early rural character, with large lots, lack of street improvements, and permitted keeping of horses. Lomita citizens have expressed great satisfaction with this type of zoning. Therefore, the city should make every attempt to retain the open space character of these areas, as well as to preserve the low and medium densities found throughout the community. Higher density residential uses should be kept within the areas designated for them in the Lomita General Plan.

Lomita's northern and southern borders are located on hills above the rest of the city. These hills, while not high, currently offer a fine view. In order to protect these areas, it is important that restrictions on building height be maintained.

One of the finest views in Lomita is that of the tree covered Palos Verdes Hills, the slopes of which begin in the southern part of the city. The trees here are not only esthetically pleasing but offer protection to the Palos Verdes Hills. Lomita should continue to protect these trees and to extend tree coverage to the central and northern sections of the city.

Lomita's soils, though diverse, are generally alluvial in nature. The city contains a few spots of prime agricultural soil, but these areas were converted many years ago to residential use. The city is not subject to significant soil erosion, as its hilly

parts are fully developed and have good ground cover. Because Lomita is highly developed, soils are important primarily in terms of their effects on building construction. Expansive soils, which may present construction problems, are scattered in minimal amounts throughout the city. However, the Lomita Building Code regulates soil preparation by means of performance standards which must be met at each construction site before building activities can occur. Consequently, soil problems have not been a deterrent to construction in the city.

Lomita contains significant deposits of sand and gravel, feldspar and diatomaceous earth. These resources have not been extracted for some time and, because of Lomita's residential nature, the city's zoning ordinance does not allow extractive land uses.

Lomita's primary underground resource is oil. The northern edge of the city extends into the Torrance oil field, on which drilling began in 1922. Thirteen wells were drilled within the city limits, but all but one are non-producing at this time. Most have been officially abandoned. When wells are abandoned, the owner is required to fill the well shaft with drilling mud and to cap it with a cement plug. The California Division of Oil and Gas approves each abandonment. The presence of abandoned wells has not caused problems in Lomita. When construction occurs on a well site, the city building inspector ensures that the well is officially abandoned and that building activities will not interfere with the well plug. The city should, however, take steps to ensure that any remaining unabandoned wells are sealed, as they could constitute a potential hazard to city residents.

Conservation for Protection of Public Health and Safety

Air and water quality are two prime requisites for the health and safety of Lomita residents. However, both are regional problems not primarily under the control of local government.

Air quality in Lomita is higher than in most areas of the Los Angeles Basin, but the city is subject to air pollution from two major sources - oil refineries and motor vehicles. Prevailing winds over the South Bay region are from the northwest. These winds sometimes carry automobile generated smog into Lomita, but generally they are conducive to a very desirable climate.

Responsibility for smog control rests primarily with the Los Angeles Air Pollution Control District, a County agency. New APCD regulations covering oil refineries and tank farms have been approved by the County Board of Supervisors and became effective in January, 1973. These regulations, which apply in part to release of sulphur and asphalt fumes to the air, should reduce complaints of noxious fumes in Lomita. This is only a partial solution to the city's total smog problem, however. The City of Lomita should take advantage of the APCD's public relations program to register future complaints and to work for improved air quality. Within the city, Lomita should continue its policy of phasing out objectionable industrial uses. While responsible for only a very small portion of the total air pollution problems, these uses do produce noise and visual blight.

Los Angeles County Water District No. 13 and the Southern California Water Service which serves Lomita, currently purchases most of the city's water supply from the Metropolitan Water District. These water supplies now come from the Colorado River, although Northern California water will soon be available. Colorado River water is highly mineralized and must be purchased in softened and filtered form. The purity of all water used by cities is certified by the State and County Health Departments. The Water District has recently completed its third water line connection to the Metropolitan Water District system, thereby ensuring constant availability of water to the city.

Additionally, the Water District is planning construction of a well which, when completed in approximately six months, will supply about 20% of the city's total water need. The cost of this well water is expected to be significantly less than that of the Metropolitan Water District. Lomita's well will draw water from the groundwater basin which extends from Santa Monica to the Palos Verdes hills and from the ocean inland to the Newport-Inglewood Fault line.

Open space legislation requires that cities look closely at environmental conditions which could pose special hazards to public health and safety. Lomita has only one such condition - the Palos Verdes fault zone.

Running along the base of the hills, the Palos Verdes fault zone touches Lomita along the city's southern border. This fault is reported to be active and to have been responsible for at least three earthquakes since 1934, although none have had epicenters in Lomita. Potential hazards from earthquakes along this fault may be increased by Lomita's alluvial soils, which tend to magnify earth movements during quakes. Lomita's low density and types of construction, however, are factors which would tend to lessen

damage from earthquake. It is impossible to determine the magnitude of any earthquake threat in Lomita in the absence of a regular seismic safety study. Such a study, which would be another required element of Lomita's General Plan, should be undertaken in the near future.

The overall danger of fire in Lomita is low. The city is served by Los Angeles County Fire Station No. 6, on Narbonne Avenue. This station can respond within two minutes to most fires in Lomita. The Fire Department maintains auxiliary services which also contribute to fire safety. These are the hazard abatement service, which is responsible for clearance of weeds and brush in the city, and the Fire Prevention Bureau. As part of fire prevention, the Bureau conducts twice yearly inspections of all commercial structures in the city and evaluates residential structures on request or on receipt of complaints.

The risk of fire in Lomita is best illustrated by the city's good rating on the National Board of Fire Underwriters scale. Communities are periodically appraised by the Underwriters as to their ability to prevent fire and to reduce loss of life and property when fires do occur. A city's total fire rating is based on a combination of factors - adequacy of fire department services, building code requirements, structural conditions in the city, and water supply. The total rating is used to determine fire insurance rates in the city. On the Underwriters scale of one to ten, where one represents the lowest risk, Lomita is rated as fire risk four, a very good rating.

Lomita is not subject to heavy flooding. The city's system of storm drains is in good condition and generally adequate to handle runoff even from major storms. Furthermore, improvements to Lomita's storm drain system are being constructed or will be constructed in order to eliminate minor drainage problems. These improvements will be made in the vicinity of 250th Street and Eshelman Avenue and near Western Avenue and 262nd Street. The Los Angeles County Flood Control District, of which Lomita is a part, is now completing a master drainage study which will include additional storm drains in Lomita. This study, to be completed within the next year, will provide the city with detailed information regarding the long term adequacy of the drainage system.

OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The three prime objectives of the Open Space-Conservation Element enumerated below are consistent with the goals of Lomita's General Plan. Additionally, several possible policies are listed which relate to each objective. Implementation of these policies will assist Lomita in solving the problems discussed in the preceding sections of the Element and will aid the city in accomplishing these open space and conservation objectives:

- I. EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE AREA AND FACILITIES TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF LOMITA RESIDENTS.
 1. Increase size, acreage and accessibility of local parks and school playgrounds.
 2. Continue to cooperate with all levels of government seeking to expand regional park facilities accessible to Lomita. Work with the Rapid Transit District and local bus companies to increase bus service to existing regional facilities.
 3. Continue to seek School District and State and Federal funds for expansion of school playground areas in Lomita.
 4. Encourage the use of innovative site planning techniques in residential redevelopment in order to free inaccessible vacant land for use in parks or open space areas.
- II. PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE OPEN SPACE CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AMENITIES OF THE CITY OF LOMITA.
 1. Allow moderate and high density land uses only in those areas recommended by the Lomita General Plan.
 2. Use open space buffer areas to separate incompatible land uses. These buffers can be designed to provide recreational open space.
 3. Continue to provide for large lots and keeping of animals in the city's agriculturally zoned residential areas.

4. Maintain current restrictions on building height in order to protect the view from elevated areas of Lomita.

III. CONSERVE AND ENHANCE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF LOMITA RESIDENTS.

1. Ensure that non-producing oil wells are officially abandoned in conformance with state law.
2. Work closely with the Air Pollution Control District to further reduce smog pollution. Phase out pollution producing industrial land uses in the city.
3. Prepare and implement a seismic safety element as part of Lomita's General Plan.
4. Continue efforts to prevent any situation from developing from outside the city's boundaries which could have an adverse effect upon the residents of Lomita (i.e. opposing any additional jet or commuter air traffic at Torrance Airport).
5. Continue a policy of opposing a freeway through any part of the City of Lomita.
6. Develop a more adequate water distribution system.

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